



Notes FROM UnderGrad

FREEDOM
SUPPORT ACT
Undergraduate
Program

Santa For a Day... Ugrad alumni share holiday cheer with local children

TOMSK, RUSSIA - It was a great New Year's Eve 2003. Together with some other ECA alumni in an activity called "there are no foreign kids," we collected clothing, books and toys for the Tomsk Orphanage No. 4. But I think the greatest thing that we did for the kids was to organize the coolest New Year's Eve party. Before the party started, we decorated the children's rooms. (As my height is 201 cm, I dealt with the hardest to reach places.) When the party began, we gave a traditional New Year's performance with me starring as Father Frost. Later there was a "snow girl" contest, where the most beautiful and artistic snow girl was chosen. Actually, every snow girl won a prize.

That evening I experienced an amazing feeling. When the little kids came to me to get a present, they looked in my eyes and saw the real Father Frost. And I looked in their eyes and felt like the real Father Frost.

Written by Andrei Belokrylov (2000-2001), who studied at Independence Community College in Independence, Kansas, and is from Tomsk, Russia.

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN - Ded Moroz and Snegurochka, along with FSA Undergraduate and other ECA alumni, decided to raise the spirits of Almaty's disabled children this past holiday season. Receiving the addresses and phone numbers of 40 children from the local administration, alumni called the parents, put together a wish list for each child and arranged a visit.

After all the presents were purchased and Ded Moroz and Snegurochka costumes rented, a conveyer belt of alumni filled bags with toys and sweets for each child. The alumni commented that labeling the bags for each child "made us feel like the real Ded Moroz in faraway Lapland." When the three teams of alumni started delivering the gifts, they entered the houses singing a New Year's song and performing a little show. Ded Moroz and Snegurochka asked the children to recite a poem, sing a song or dance. The children were overjoyed with the gifts and visits, and the parents were happy and grateful as well. All of the families were very hospitable, inviting the alumni to stay for lunch or tea.

VOLGOGRAD, RUSSIA - Alumni from the Volgograd region spent their American Christmas Eve with children from a local orphanage and a regional hospital. Pooling their funds, they hired local puppeteer Viktor Katulin and his theater to perform for the children. Prior to the event, Angela Vorobey, FSA Undergraduate Alumni Fellow 2002, and Elena Verbitskaya, FLEX Alumni Assistant 2001, collected funds from 18 FSAU, FLEX and Muskie alumni to buy presents for 50 of these children. Contributors to the event among FSA Undergraduate alumni include: Marat Geksembaev (2000-2001), Angela Vorobey (2001-2002), Ilya Ilyinov (1994-1995), Maksim Korobov (1994-1995), Ekaterina Pekarskaya (2000-2001), and Dmitriy Chernov (2001-2002). See photo gallery for more.

Tamara Stebunova (2001-2002) poses with an Almaty-area Ded Moroz during their Christmas visits to disabled Children.

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From the Field

During the 2002-2003 academic year, 14 alumni of the FSA Undergraduate Program were selected to serve as this year's Alumni Fellows – a one-year position coordinating alumni activities for the FSAU community in an American Councils overseas office.

AURICA BALMUS, CHISINAU, MOLDOVA:

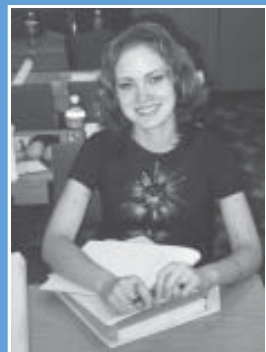
“What does it mean to be an alumni fellow? It is coming to work with a smile on my face. It's working with joy and excitement with special people. It is primarily building a community of exceptional young individuals who have an impact on the development of our country.



Being an alumni fellow means assisting and stimulating alumni to fulfill their ideas and their potential. It is not just organizing alumni activities—it is keeping the alumni together and creating a sense of identity for UGRAD alumni.”

FIRUZA HAITOVA, ASHGABAT, TURKMENISTAN:

“Life is a chain of challenges and the more we have to face, the stronger and easier life is itself. For me personally, becoming an FSAU alumni fellow was one of ‘those’ decision—challenges that brought along a set of drastic changes into my social and personal life. Being employed for the first time in my life, initially I was overwhelmed with the various responsibilities and duties that were to be taken care of immediately. However, I learned to exercise my communication and organization skills, tried to locate the balance between assertiveness and flexibility, learned about budgets and time management—all of which started to play a crucial role in my professional and personal growth. I am very grateful



to all my alumni for their amazing experience and great enthusiasm that they have contributed to our co-operation and development as individuals and community.”

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About THE Newsletter

Notes from UnderGrad is a forum for the FREEDOM Support Act Undergraduate community to express views and share the FSAU experience. Published three times a year, the newsletter is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and produced by American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS in conjunction with the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX).

About the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs conducts educational and training exchange programs with Eurasia with the aim of fostering mutual understanding between the United States and the countries of Eurasia. Authorized through the Fulbright-Hays Act and the FREEDOM Support Act, the FSA Undergraduate Program is designed to foster democratization and economic development in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

How to Participate - See yourself in Print. Here's How!

Open Forum | Have something to share with the FSAU community? Submit personal essays on your experience with the program, thoughts on international politics or current affairs, or statements about your academic or professional challenges. Essays should be 300 words or less.

Point of View | We know you have an opinion. Tell us what it is! Stay tuned for the **Point of View Question** by email and through the new list-serve groups.yahoo.com/group/NotesfromUnderGrad/. Essays should be 300 words or less. Photos strongly encouraged.

Upward Mobility | What have you done for yourself lately? Tell us about your promotions, participation in conferences, professional and academic achievements. Submissions should be 100 words or less.

In the Community | What have you done for your community? Let us know about your community service either in the U.S. or at home. Submissions should be 200 words or less.

Photo Gallery | A picture is worth a thousand words. Tell us your FSAU story in either electronic or hard copy photographs. We'd like to see you at alumni events, conferences and workshops, professional and community service activities. Include descriptions of the event and names of all individuals in the photo. Please send hard copy photographs with return address information so they can be returned to you.

Notes from UnderGrad Editorial Committee and Contact Information

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Did we forget something? Submit ideas for new sections and other ideas about *Notes from UnderGrad*. The Editorial Committee will take all letters into consideration.

Submission Guidelines

In the United States, please submit materials to ljilka@pd.state.gov or asantimore@irex.org.

In Russia and Eurasia, please submit materials to ugradalum@actr.ru or millman@americancouncils.org. Submissions may be edited for style and language. Not all essays submitted will be printed. All submissions must include name, year of participation in program, university attended and contact information including email address.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE FALL ISSUE: MAY 30, 2003.

Open Forum

Thoughts of an Old Alumna

by ANNA BRITAEVA

While reading the winter issue of the *Notes from UnderGrad*, I understood one thing—I am a very old undergrad alumna. I don't mean my age or that my program was a long time ago (1996-1997). I've just lost the feeling. The euphoric overtones in my voice have disappeared along with my always-smiling expression and have changed into a keep-out-of-my-face Muscovite mask. I no longer have the desire to say "hi" and talk about America to every single passing person. My photographs have turned yellow. My last pair of Levi's has been thrown away. And Sarah, my American roommate, hasn't e-mailed me for ages. But America doesn't let go that easily.

For the last three years, I've been working at the American Center in Moscow. For those who don't know what it is, the Center is a public library just like the ones back in the States. It has circulation and reference desks, Internet access and databases as well as cultural and educational programs. In other words, the Center is an American island in Moscow where you can land to hear the so familiar and nostalgic American-English accent, find a necessary American textbook or magazine. It's a place where you can drag your friends to watch a movie and show off while translating the most difficult parts.

And here at the Center, we can invent something interesting for ourselves, fellow alumni. We can charge each other with energy and new ideas, let our large and small successes spur us on to greater effort. We're spread out all over Russia but we can gather once in a while. Those who live in Moscow are always welcome to the Center for a talk, or discussion with our patrons, for inspiration you can share with those who are not that lucky as we were. And the Center can certainly be a home for an UnderGrad Alumni Club. Let's choose the date for our first meeting!

Anna Britaeva (1996-1997) studied at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, and is from Moscow, Russia.

For more information on the American Center, visit: www.amc.ru.

Funny U.S. Moments

by OLGA ONISHCHENKO

When you are abroad many things seem strange to you and even funny. You try to adapt to a new environment and act like local people do, but sometimes your actions or words may remind people once again that you are a foreigner and put a smile on their faces. When I think about my year spent in the U.S. I recall so many moments like that, and I would like to share some of them with you.

On the first day I came to the U.S., I decided to call my parents. I bought a phone card at a grocery store and was told that I could make a phone call right outside the shop from the phone booth. I was so excited to call, but when I saw the phone I panicked—there was no slot in which to put my phone card. Luckily, some FSA students, who had already been in town for two weeks for orientation, passed by and revealed to me the "secret of a magic card."

Another time I felt stupid was at the cafeteria at Pennsylvania State University during orientation. It was dinnertime. I was not that hungry but when I saw the beautifully cut "carrots," I decided that they would be my option for the day. I filled my whole bowl with the "carrots" and headed happily to the table. Do you know how frustrated I was after I tried those "carrots?" They appeared to be orange cheese cut exactly the same way as we used to cut carrots in my family. I didn't want to show my mistake to others and had to eat all the cheese.

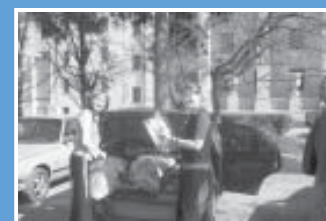
But the funniest thing happened to me at William Jewell College, my host institution. Do you remember how different sororities and fraternities were recruiting students to their organizations during the first week of class? Well, that time I performed the best joke ever, although not on purpose, of course. When I was asked: "Are you rushing?" I proudly replied: "No. I am Ukrainian."

Even though these small episodes made me feel awkward, I recall them with great pleasure now. These are nice moments.

Olga Onishchenko (2000-2001) studied at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, and is from Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine.

In the Community

Clothing Drive for Local Orphanage



FSAU alumni pack a car with clothes and gifts for delivery.

Recent efforts by six alumni of the FSA Undergraduate Program resulted in significant aid to local children in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and have inspired this group to continue their efforts. Shokhrat Orazov, Aysenem Tuylieva, Konstantin Beslekoiev, Vepa Nurnazarov, Merdan Atayev and Ovezmurad Agayev collected clothing and footwear and delivered them to a local orphanage for visually impaired children in January and February, 2003. As a result of their active advertising and promotion of the clothing drive, 147 items of clothing, 37 items of footwear, and 27 toys were collected and distributed. The donations also included funds for special stationery needed for blind children and personal items for the female students.

Alumni in Moldova Conduct Leadership Seminars for Rural High School Youth

ECA alumni in Chisinau, Moldova completed the second of five planned community service events for rural high school students. On January 29-30, 2003, Tatiana Babii (FSA Undergraduate 2000-2001), Aurica Balmus (FSA Undergraduate 2000-2001), and Silvia Ursu (FLEX 1999-2000) conducted leadership seminars at a Lyceum in Soroca. During the seminars, which were held in English, the alumni discussed with the students what qualities a leader must possess, identified different types of leaders, and made clear that everyone has the potential to lead in certain areas. During the two-day event, role-plays were used to help the students identify the challenges and problems of leading, and to explore solutions to common leadership challenges.

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In the Community

Oleksandr Kupyna

Velyki Gai, Ukraine
Mississippi State
Mississippi State, MS

Oleksandr was one of seven members of a nine-person Mississippi State University team awarded honorable mention in an intercollegiate competition of more than 50 schools in the recent 2002 Southern Regional Model United Nations. Portraying various diplomatic officials of the key Middle Eastern nation of Kuwait, the Mississippi State participants were among some 500 at the annual Atlanta conference that seeks to promote a better understanding of critical world issues.



From the front cover story 'Santa for a Day,' Andrey Belakrylon as Ded Moroz during the New Year's party at Tomsk Orphanage # 4.

Yerevan Computer Skills Project Extended and Expanded

A project that began with three days of seminars on computer skills and conflict resolution at a Yerevan boarding school has been extended to include additional visits by FSA Undergraduate alumni. From January 28-30, 2003, 12 alumni conducted the initial seminar at Boarding School No. 2 in Yerevan. Seven alumni gave one-hour workshops and taught the students the basics of computer and Internet use, while five other FSA Undergraduates held a conflict resolution training seminar for 30 students. Following these seminars, it was agreed that the students, who are

Point of View

When asked, "How did your life change after Ugrad?" FSA Undergraduates responded with the following essays. The views and opinions expressed on this page are strictly those of the authors.

A New Appreciation

by FIRYUZA BABAYEVA

In my teenage years, I had a dream: to learn English and go to the U.S. It took a while for this dream to come true. After applying for the FSA Undergraduate program, I waited impatiently to know whether I was accepted or not. And the next thing that happened to me was that I was in the plane looking as the houses grew smaller and smaller as the plane rose higher and higher. I could not believe that it was happening to me. I was leaving my country, my family and friends for a long period of time.

At that time I couldn't possibly imagine how my life was going to change and what kind of person I would become. A new lifestyle, new people, everything including the food was so different. I learned a lot about American people, their culture, values and traditions. And not only about Americans but also other people, such as Mexicans, Africans and Japanese, just to name a few. After living almost seven months in the States and grasping what I call "the taste of America," my vision of the future and my career goals have totally changed. I have become a more liberal, optimistic and a challenge-seeking person. My career goal is now to go into business. Now I believe that working hard leads to success.

I also have a greater appreciation for the things I left behind. The truth is I miss things about Turkmenistan I didn't think I'd miss. Maybe that's the best thing about living abroad—not the perspective you get on the rest of the world, but the perspective you get on home. When I finally come home from America, I will perceive a very different Turkmenistan.

Firyuza Babayeva studies at the College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California, and is from Turkmenabat, Turkmenistan.

I Can't Believe It

by HAYK GHAZARYAN

I'll be short. My life obviously has changed—it has changed a lot. It has changed so much that I can't believe it is my life, because I would never think I would end up having so many friends in my life and from so many countries. The change of course is positive. I think there is even no need to emphasize that. It has changed also the way that I now understand what I want from life, what makes me happy. I can't believe this but I FOUND MYSELF and life that seemed to be a maze a year ago. Maybe it is still a maze, but I can now find the way out, which leads to freedom, democracy and understanding other cultures and countries and all this thanks to the FSAU Program and everyone related to it.

Hayk Ghazaryan studies at the University of Alabama in Huntsville and is from Yerevan, Armenia.



Hayk Ghazaryan (on the right) poses with new friends and classmates from his web design course.

How did my life change after FSA Ugrad?

by OLESYA KRAVCHUK

I am always asking myself this question and always finding a thousand answers to it. The first change is that when people find out I have studied in the U.S., they are more interested in me. This is always good because my profession is journalism, and I always need to attract people's attention in order to write good articles.

Journalism and communication was my major at the University of Wyoming. My classes along with my internship helped me gain a lot of professional experience. After returning to Ukraine, I worked as a journalist for the local Ternopil newspaper and applied the knowledge I gained in the U.S. when writing articles. I also wrote articles about real life in the States. Probably, I even destroyed stereotypes about America and Americans in some readers' minds, because I always wanted to show that real life in the States is not like it is portrayed in the movies.

I had my internship at Wyoming Public Radio, where I worked with audio-files. I did everything one needs to do in the studio: archiving, recording, erasing, forming and formatting radio-files. Now I am a



Olesya and good friend Buggy.

journalist at a popular FM radio-station in Ternopil. I have two programs I create myself and my technical knowledge gained at the American radio station has helped me a lot. I did not even need to study everything I do now; I just recalled all I had already learned.

I think for gaining such an experience in Ukraine I would probably need about three years of journalism work. In the USA I needed only one, but a very active and productive year to be who I am now.

Olesya Kravchuk (2000-2001) studied at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming, and is from Ternopil, Ukraine.

A Vision Gained in U.S.

by SARVARBEK NURMUKHAMEDOV

Recently, one of my teachers noticed my bleached hair and commented, "If I were you, I wouldn't be a golden boy. You just have no vision."

Did I come back from the States without a vision or having changed?!

The question I have asked myself lately is how I changed my way of thinking and my attitude toward things around me. Before, I doubt if I could work up the courage to speak up and answer this kind of question from my teacher. But now whatever I'm thinking about—my future

plans, career or ambitions—what I feel is "I can do that."

This is what I've developed which I think I lacked before—CONFIDENCE. Now I believe in myself and I feel the confidence inside of me to make things possible. Going and studying abroad might have seemed a dream for me a couple of years ago. Not anymore. Because I already did it. I also believe that dreams have power. The only thing you need for dreams to come true is confidence. My logo has become: "Believe in yourself, the rest is possible."

Sarvarbek Nurmukhamedov (2001-2002) studied at Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho, and is from Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

How to contribute?!

by ALEXANDR SVETLICINII

There is a big discussion going on among current fellows who are close to the end of the program about how to use the knowledge and experience gained in the U.S. in our homelands. Unfortunately, some of the fellows are quite pessimistic about the topic. This is understandable. Sometimes it is difficult to believe that we could organize community projects and other events with the same success as we observed in the U.S. There is also great doubt about how loyal our fellow citizens would be, especially youth who never saw what we did in the U.S. So how really can we use all these skills?

This program has significantly changed our lives. U.S. academic life taught us how to think critically, how to analyze, how to value and filter information. Our community projects and internships gave us a sense of professional ethics, hard and productive work, time management, punctuality, certain managerial knowledge and strong communication skills. If we want to rebuild our home countries to the level of postindustrial societies as in the West, all these skills should be a part of our mentality. Regardless of our future field of activity, we should always keep in mind everything useful and practical we learned here. By treating people in the same friendly way as we were treated by Americans, being active, creative and open-minded, we will slowly but inevitably change the attitude of our fellow citizens. Thus we can "make a big difference" home as the FSAU Program did in our lives.

Alexandr Svetlicinii studies at California State University Bakersfield and is from Chisinau, Moldova.

predominantly from poor and disadvantaged households, would benefit from additional English and computer instruction. The same alumni decided to meet with the students for several more months to help them improve their English and computer skills, in particular their Internet skills. The project will continue with alumni meeting with the students once a week for computer instruction.

Lydiya Syvko

Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine

"Neosho County Community College" and "flat Kansas" became very dear words for me not only because I experienced so many interesting and unknown things there, but also because of the influence they had on me. I cannot say that I was a cold-hearted person, but I can say I was blind. I couldn't see the opportunities that surrounded me. After I spent a year at this college and in a small American community, I realized that there are opportunities to use your skills everywhere. One just needs to look attentively and the opportunity will present itself.

What did we do in Chanute? We helped in the art gallery, worked at various public events, made boxes with presents for kids in the hospital, served as extra hands in the community theater, and much, much more. There were many different projects, and I discovered something important: if you do something for your community, your volunteering lifts spirits and gives others hope. It even lifts you up in your own eyes! It is a way of self-realization and self-actualization for me. When I left the United States, I knew exactly what I would do.

As soon as I returned to my university, I went to the local youth club and suggested organizing an English club for children. I am an instructor there, and I can say we have done a very good job. I try to teach children speaking skills and show them a part of another culture. We learn poems and little sayings that children in America would know for sure! We play games and drink tea together. I hope the kids are enjoying themselves. It is so

continued on next page

In the Community Upward Mobility

different than anything I did before! I feel that the kids are gaining some knowledge and enjoy being with me. Hopefully, I'll continue this project and even more children will come to class.

I can not think of an end to this story. My only thought is that one day, one of these kids will go to America and experience some of the things I did.

Lydiya Synko (2001-2002) studied at Neosho Community College in Chanute, Kansas, and is from Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine.

December 1-15: World Aids Day Event

In honor of World AIDS Day on December 1, FSA Undergraduate alumni in Kazakhstan devoted two weeks of their time to an intensive information outreach campaign to disseminate information about AIDS prevention in schools and universities in Almaty. The alumni distributed materials such as posters, brochures and calendars among students and in classrooms of seven different universities, and conducted workshops in three different high schools in the Almaty area. Alumni spread the word about the USAID-funded "Red Apple Hotline," a resource for young people to obtain free, anonymous advice regarding family planning and contraception. For the information campaign in the high schools, the alumni received training from the "Peer to Peer" organization that conducts workshops on drug abuse and AIDS prevention in Kazakhstan. These workshops focused on AIDS prevention and the rights of children, and included topics such as the United Nations Declaration of Children Rights (1959), and the Convention of Children Rights (1989). The alumni involved in this project include: Assel Salikhova (2001-2002), Tamara Stebunova (2001-2002), Zhanar Altybayeva (2001-2002), Madina Tleuova (2001-2002), Aigerim Bizhanova (2000-2001), Bates Assilbekova (2000-2001), Alibek Nurbekov (2000-2001), Svetlana Mikhassik (2001-2002) and Alexei Volkov (2000-2001).

Class of 1993-1994

Zhanar Alzhanova is a lawyer working for Michael Wilson and Partners Company. Zhanar studied at Utah State University in Logan, Utah, and is from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Class of 1994-1995

Zhan Mustafin is a senior specialist in the department of finance control at ABN AMRO Bank and works in accounting and management. He started working at ABN AMRO while studying for a Master's degree at Reading University. Zhan studied at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, and is from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Ilona Gumanyuk has established the Celtic Culture Lovers' Club, the only Royal Society Scottish Dancers' group in Russia. She fell in love with Scottish dancing while teaching Russian at Bristol University in 1999. Several local newspapers such as *Zhizn*, *Molodezhnyy Prospekt Kubani* and *Krasnodarskie Izvestiya* have written about Ilona's activity. Ilona studied at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri, and is from Krasnodar, Russia.

Class of 1995-1996

Aidar Utkelov holds a number of positions in Almaty, Kazakhstan, including president of KBS Realty, deputy director of CRE (Capital Real Estate), general director of Horomy Estates LLP, vice president of the Almaty Association of Realtors and general representative of NCH Advisors Inc., an OPIC-supported U.S. investment fund. Aidar studied at Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York, and is from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Class of 1996-1997

Aigoul Nourmakhanova is an associate director of Visor Investment Solutions, working on questions of investment and banking in Kazakhstan. Aigoul studied at Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts, and is from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Anton Larin is an account executive at Panda Advertising Company. Previously, he worked as an analyst at Regent European Securities, as a specialist in public relations at Golden Eagle Partners and as a reporting manager at Counterpart Consortium. Anton studied at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, and is from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Class of 1997-1998

Grigoriy Belyakov works as a senior public affairs analyst at Exxon Neftegas Limited in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia. Grigoriy took part in the Global Village Program and actively promotes it in his home city. Grigoriy studied at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and is from Kholmok, Russia.

Class of 1998-1999

Ayla Azizova has been promoted to the government and public affairs administrator at Exxon

Azerbaijan Operating Company LLC in Baku. She also recently passed a two-day training course in conflict resolution conducted by a specialist from Brussels. Ayla studied at Utica College of Syracuse University in Utica, New York, and is from Baku, Azerbaijan.

Haykanush Hovhanissyan is currently working as a translator in the Central Election Committee, the major body organizing the 2003 presidential election in Armenia. Haykanush studied at Moorhead State University in Moorhead, Minnesota, and is from Yerevan, Armenia.

Class of 1999-2000

Veronika Taldykina has recently been offered a position at Far Eastern State University (FESU) in Vladivostok. She currently works as a French teacher in the department of romance languages and the School of European Languages, an affiliate of FESU. Veronika studied at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Alabama, and is from Vladivostok, Russia.

Marya Shmoylova is moving to Murmansk, Russia this spring to work as an interpreter for the Russian-Norwegian fishing transportation company Nordtral. Marya studied at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon, Washington, and is from Astrakhan, Russia.

Class of 2000-2001

Nina Turina was awarded a fellowship by the Open Society Institute to study for a Master's degree at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. There, she comments, "I meet many alumni from FSA programs, even the ones I got to know in the United States! It is only natural that after a powerful intellectual and 'social skills' push-up we received in the U.S., the alumni seek further education." In Russia, Nina worked as a journalist, writing about culture and ethnic questions. Nina studied at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, and is from Novorossiysk, Russia.

Bahar Selimova has been hired as an executive secretary at UNOCAL. Bahar studied at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia, and is from Baku, Azerbaijan.

Irakli Matkava successfully graduated from the Tbilisi State University Department of International Relations and International Law in summer 2002. He is working as a policy analyst at the Strategic Resource Center in the Security Council of Georgia—the highest organ dealing with state security in Georgia. He hopes to contribute to the development and enhancement of Georgia's national interest and security strategy. Irakli studied at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, and is from Tbilisi, Georgia.

Ekaterina Shabanova will be attending the International Student Festival in Trondheim, Norway. The participants will discuss attitudes about the

world around them, including religion and terrorism, economic development, and environmental problems. In Astrakhan, Katya is chairman of the English Center, an NGO providing English lessons and resources that was founded by another FSAU alumna, Lisa Hesket. Katya studied at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, and is from Astrakhan, Russia.

Abdualil Abdurasulov was accepted for a summer internship in Geneva, Switzerland, working in the sphere of international relations. Abdualil studied at Independence Community College in Independence, Kansas, and is from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Class of 2001-2002

Zhanar Altybayeva is the local committee president for AISEC-Almaty. Zhanar took part in an AISEC summit in Ekaterinburg, Russia in August 2002, in the CELDS workshop in Wisla, Poland, in November 2002 and at the National Congress in Moscow, Russia in February 2003. Zhanar studied at Olney Central College in Olney, Illinois, and is from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Oksana Gousselnikova and **Ivan Pechorin** were selected for internship positions at the U.S. Consulate General in Vladivostok, Russia. They will work in the commercial section, under a new initiative organized by American Councils Vladivostok. Oksana studied at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York, and Ivan studied at Marshalltown Community College in Marshalltown, Iowa. They are both from Vladivostok, Russia.

Vyacheslav Shirokov was selected to be a member of the Russian Far East Model United Nations debate team to participate in an international forensics tournament in San Francisco later this spring. Slava studied at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska, and is from Blagoveshchensk, Russia.

Aynura Ahmadova successfully ended her probationary period as a human resources associate at Halli Burton KBR. Aynura studied at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, and is from Baku, Azerbaijan.

Dmitry Emelyanov is a financial manager at the Public Union Reproductive Health Alliance, an organization that promotes sexual health information. Dmitry is involved in a financial sustainability development project. Dmitry studied at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, Minnesota, and is from Karakol, Kyrgyzstan.

Shairbek Juraev was awarded paid travel expenses to attend the Trondheim International Student Festival in Norway. Shair is a student at the American University of Central Asia and is interested in human rights issues. Shair studied at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi, and is from Leylek, Kyrgyzstan.

Arevik Mahtesyan is working as a volunteer at the International Foundation of Electoral Systems. She feels that this kind of community service is especially important with the upcoming elections in Armenia. She also interns as a teacher at the V. Brusov Linguistic College. Arevik studied at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia, and is from Yerevan, Armenia.

Lilit Dadikyan is working as an intern at the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia. Lilit studied at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, and is from Gavar, Armenia.

Irina Arutyunova works as an interpreter at the Rotary Club in Yerevan. Irina studied at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, and is from Yerevan, Armenia.

Tigran Grigoryan works as a software developer and internet marketing specialist at Hi-Tech Gateway LLC. Tigran studied at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi, and is from Yerevan, Armenia.

Murat Saryev participated in the Turkmen State Olympiad where he won third place as a representative of the English language team from Turkmen State University. Murat studied at Alma College in Alma, Missouri, and is from Mary, Turkmenistan.

Olga Zhurzhenko participated in the International Model United Nations conference in Geneva, Switzerland in March 2003. She noted that to represent the United States of America in the World Intellectual Property Organization was a challenge for her, which she overcame successfully by building largely on her FSA Undergraduate experience. Olga Zhurzhenko also received a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv to participate in the European Council simulation at the European International Model United Nations 2002 conference, that took place July 4 - 10, 2002 in The Hague, the Netherlands. Olga studied at St. Bonaventure University in St. Bonaventure, New York, and is from Odesa, Ukraine.

Denys Goychuk participated in the international students' scientific conference "Actual Problems of Agricultural Producing: Outlook, Research, Application," in Lviv, Ukraine, this past October 2002. His presentation touched on the social and economic problems of small-scale forest property on former collective farm in Ukraine. Denys studied at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska, and is from Kyiv, Ukraine.

Iryna Temchenko

Ternopil, Ukraine
Slippery Rock University
Slippery Rock, PA



Iryna, standing in the center, cleans up Chinatown in San Francisco.

"Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance and when you get the choice to sit it out or dance, I hope you dance... I hope you dance"

With these words began the 8th Annual Leadership Conference of Slippery Rock University. I participated in it as a representative of the Institute of Community, Service-Learning and Nonprofit Leadership. A major component each spring is Care Break, our alternative spring break program. This year 65 students and staff went to five cities where they tutored children, helped the elderly, assisted the homeless, cared for AIDS patients, and worked on environmental projects. Each site was led by two students; I was the co-lead in San Francisco. My responsibility was to create the outline of the project, recruit and train participants, supervise participants on committees, provide feedback to the Care Break Coordinator, all while doing my school work successfully! I have been extremely busy since the beginning of the spring semester, securing lodging, reserving a van for the group, developing and delivering team building initiatives for the group, and meeting every Wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m. with the other Care Break leads for our professional development training. Of course, all this work took a lot of my free time and energy. But it was worth it. As soon as I got all my work done and the trip set up, I was the happiest person ever. First of all, I realized that I CAN do it and I can be proud of myself. Secondly, I made other people happy; I helped those who were waiting for my help. A lot of bright memories remain in my mind, and I will never forget how I spent my spring break. So, people, if you have a chance to dance... I hope you dance.



◀ Mariana Vanetsyan was a volunteer at the South Beaver Elementary School in Flagstaff, Arizona, where she helped first graders with their assignments. Mariana studies at Northern Arizona University and is from Yerevan, Armenia.



► Members of the political committee debate the content of their final resolution during the FSAU regional conference "NATO and Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus" held on March 28-30 in Kyiv, Ukraine. Details about the four FSAU regional conferences are forthcoming in the Summer 2003 issue of Notes from UnderGrad.



◀ FSAU alumna Tatyana Vavulenko (2000-2001), is presented with a certificate by business trainer-consultant Roman Yelizarov, Muskie 1996, at a Ekaterinburg Professional Development Seminar.

▼ Alumni Fellow Bates Assilbekova (2000-2001) and fellow volunteer Shnara Karimova post announcements during the March 15, 2003, Walk against Tuberculosis in Almaty, Kazakhstan.



► FSAU alumnus Anatoliy Sakhno (2000-2001) presents an activity to explore prejudice at the Diversity Training Seminar in Kharkiv, Ukraine, requiring American Councils Office Director Jen Wilson to play the role of a Nazi.



Photo Gallery



◀ A December 22 outing at Chymbulak, Kazakhstan, brings together FSA Undergraduate alumni Murad Omoev (1998-1999), Assel Salikhova (2001-2002), Zhanar Altybayeva (2001-2002), Bates Assilbekova (2000-2001) and Alibek Nurbekov (2000-2001) to go innertubing.



▶ Ergeniy Dengub (2000-2001) gives a lecture on presentation skills to other ECA alumni at the Russian Far East Alumni Debate Conference in Khabarovsk, Russia.

◀ Olga Zhurzhenko (2001-2002) makes sure everything is in order at the registration table for the November Model UN conference she organized in Odesa, Ukraine.



◀ FSAU alumni in Moldova Tatiana Babii (2000-2001), Aurica Balmus (2000-2001) and Diana Acristinii (2001-2002) helping children at a local homeless shelter write "thank you" cards to Santa Claus after delivering them Christmas gifts.

▶ Members of the economics committee at the FSAU regional conference in Kyiv actively demonstrate one impression of the NATO appeal: they are entering the conference room in the form of a human airplane.



▶ Angela Vorobey, alumni fellow in Volgograd, shows off her new puppeteering skills in a local orphanage.

▶ Why a limbo contest at a Valentine's Day party in Novosibirsk?

FSAU Alumni Fellow Natalia Kocheturova (pictured holding the bar) responds, "it was just so much fun!"



Alumni in Action

Armenia

FSAU Alumni in Armenia Participate in Anti-Corruption Seminar

Twenty-four alumni of the FSA Undergraduate program attended a seminar in Yerevan dedicated to a discussion of corruption on February 18, 2003. The seminar brought together alumni with leaders from the government, private organizations and university students to discuss how to identify and fight corruption in Armenia. Amalia Kostanyan, chairman of Transparency International, started the seminar by talking about the origins of corruption and the current situation in Armenia. She also discussed the programs that her organization has implemented in order to fight corrupt practices. The next speaker, Armen Khudaverdyan, the coordinator of the Government Anti-Corruption Working Group, talked about the collaboration that was taking place between the government of Armenia and the World Bank in order to root out unethical business practices. Mr.

Khudaverdyan also gave an overview of the types of corruption taking place in Armenia and then answered several questions from the audience about the government's perspective on this issue. Two alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs also spoke at the seminar:

Gayane Ghukasian (Muskie 1998) addressed the problem of corruption in university admissions, and Ani Dagesyan (FSA Undergraduate 1999-2000), looked at the issue of corruption in higher education from a student's point of view.

Azerbaijan

Baku Alumni Learn How to Establish an NGO

On December 23, 2002, alumni in Baku, Azerbaijan, met with a specialist in NGO creation in order to receive advice about opening an alumni resource center. Avaz Gasanov, director of the Society for Humanitarian Research, outlined the steps that alumni will have to take to bring this project to completion, such as the preparation of registration documents, how to arrange funding and how to coordinate a budget. Seven FSA Undergraduate alumni participated in the event. Alumni are hopeful that the information they received at this seminar will help them as they try to establish a resource center.

Belarus

FSAU Alumni Conduct Leadership Training for FLEX Alumni

On March 12, 2003, alumni of the FSA Undergraduate program held a leadership training seminar at the American Center for Education and Research for 12 alumni of the FLEX program. The trainers were Inna Ivanyuk (2001-2002), Anastasiya Lukyanova (1999-2000), and Pavel Kudriavtsev (1996-1997). The goal of the training was to work on developing leadership skills of each individual. The main topics covered at the training were time management, risk assessment, "getting comfortable with the uncomfortable", and coping with difficult situations. The program of training included both theoretical material as well as practical games and discussions, and the general impression of the training was very positive from the FLEX alumni. Further training on this and other topics for alumni and local high school students are planned.



Alumni pose with children from an orphanage in Kojori.

Georgia

Alumni Visit Orphanage in Kojori, Georgia

FSA Undergraduate alumni along with other ECA alumni visited an orphanage in the Eastern Georgia community of Kojori on January 31, 2003. The alumni spent the day distributing presents and other donations collected from the annual Christmas campaign to 50 orphans, ages 6 to 16. Alumni sang songs and read poetry with the orphans and gave them chocolate, cookies and candy as prizes for their performances. Alumni also presented the orphans with a blackboard and helped them to hang it on the wall. The alumni have made plans to set up another program to help these children by improving their living conditions and helping them acquire the skills they will need to find employment after leaving the orphanage.

Kazakhstan

Proposal Writing Workshop Held in Almaty, Kazakhstan

FSA Undergraduate and other ECA alumni attended a workshop in

Eugene Fedorinov (2001-2002) mans the desk at the registration office at the mock international student orientation at Moldova State University.

Almaty on January 18, 2003 designed to teach them how to prepare grant applications. An alumnus of the JFDP program, Dr. Artem Yermilov, led the event. Dr. Yermilov taught the alumni how to structure their proposals and incorporate techniques involving logic, argumentation and the use of a thesis statement. He also drew on his experience with grant applications and offered advice about the application process. In addition, the workshop was a chance to publicize the availability of grants to ECA alumni and to encourage alumni to submit their applications.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan Alumni Receive Professional "TOT" Training

In preparation for an outreach program that will take them to local Kyrgyz schools to train children in human rights issues and other social concerns, 11 FSA Undergraduate alumni took part in a training session with three local expert trainers in Bishkek. The skills taught are applicable to any topic area, and are invaluable skills both in the classroom and on the job. Sessions included the implementation of interactive methodologies, how to structure materials, and how to gauge audience expectations and needs. The alumni practiced the basics of any training program, which includes setting aside time for discussion, the relation between lecturing and hands-on activity sessions, the use of problem-solving and case studies, and the very basic step of scheduling coffee breaks. Along with 11 alumni, four members of a local NGO community involved in outreach and training programs were invited to take part in this session. The NGO representatives were able to share their personal experiences with the group and network with the alumni.

Moldova

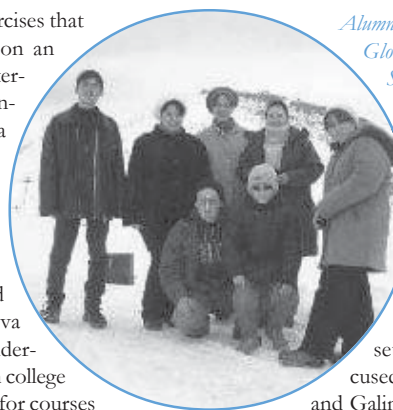
Interactive Workshop at Moldova State University Led by FSA Undergraduate Alumni

During International Education Week, FSA Undergraduate alumni led 30 students and professors from

Moldova State



University through a set of exercises that replicated the first few days on an American campus for a new international student. Four FSA Undergraduate alumni (Aurica Balmus 2000-2001, Diana Acristinii 2001-2002, Alexandra Leahu 2001-2002, and Eugene Fedorinov 2001-2002) as well as RSEP alumna Marina Kaim (2000) organized an activity that required Moldova State University students to understand course requirements from college catalogues, line up and register for courses and receive a new student I.D. card. All participants received hand-outs about the U.S. educational system and a glossary of terms. Received as both interesting and fun for the students, this was just one of the activities held in Moldova during International Education Week.



Alumni and session leaders for the Global Environmental Issues Seminar take a break between activities.

24-25, 2003. The classes took place at the Takob Ski Resort, located a couple hours north of Dushanbe. The resort provided the perfect setting for this ecology-focused event. Timur Idrisov and Galina Bardashova from the ecological organization "For Earth!" led workshops such as "Water Resources in Tajikistan," "The Causes and Effects of Earthquakes," and "Mountain Geography of Tajikistan." The alumni and four university students who participated in the workshops then investigated the surrounding environment using their newfound knowledge.

In addition to leading the workshops, Idrisov and Bardashova organized a variety of other activities, including brainstorming sessions and interactive games, one of which explored the consequences of earthquakes. In the evening of the first day there was an astronomy lesson, and for part of the second day participants explored the local environment on skis and snowmobiles. The event took place during the "Year of Clean Water," which was officially declared by the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov.

Turkmenistan

Round-Table on U.S. Assistance in Turkmenistan

On December 16, 2002, a round-table discussion was held at the American Councils office in Ashgabat on the subject of U.S. assistance in Turkmenistan and the prospects for continued cooperation between the two countries. The guest speaker at the round-table was Robert Tansey, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy of Turkmenistan. The discussion centered on the potential for expanded cooperation in the areas of business and culture, political issues, and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. Present at the event were 17 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, including six FSA Undergraduate Program alumni. It is hoped that the event will allow alumni and local U.S. officials to learn more about each other, making it easier to coop-

erate on projects of mutual interest.

Ukraine

Diversity Training Workshop in Kharkiv

Sixteen alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs from around Ukraine traveled to Kharkiv on January 16, 2003 to participate in a training workshop on diversity conducted by the Kharkiv American Councils office. Jennifer Wilson, Kateryna Nalyvayko (FSA Undergraduate 1998-1999) and Lyudmyla Suprun (FLEX 1998-1999) began the seminar by discussing the nature of stereotypes and how they manifest themselves in everyday life. They taught the alumni techniques that will enable them to identify stereotypes and avoid relying on them when encountering new people. The training also focused on creative ways to fight prejudice in Ukraine. During the course of the seminar, participants were instructed in how to conduct similar workshops in their home communities. The 15 alumni who attended the workshop included seven FSA Undergraduate alumni.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan Alumni Attend Training Retreat

The Yusufkhona Resort on the shores of Chorvak Reservoir in Uzbekistan provided a tranquil backdrop for the second annual training retreat for alumni of the FSA Undergraduate and Muskie/FSA Graduate programs. The 16 alumni (14 FSA Undergraduate, 2 Muskie) spent the weekend of February 15-16, 2003 at the site, where they attended seminars on public speaking and effective reading skills. The first part of the event was a public speaking session led by Sureyva Yigit, CEP Fellow and Cambridge University Ph.D. Candidate. Mr. Yigit asked each and Oxford Ph.D. candidate, Maite Ojeda-Mata, led the seminar on effective reading designed for application in both work and academic settings. Alumni commented that they would be able to apply the skills they learned at these workshops in the work setting, in professional research, and at the university.



Robert Tansey, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat (second from right), met with alumni to discuss the subject of U.S. assistance to Turkmenistan and relations between Turkmenistan and the United States.

Russia

Field Trip Introduces Alumni to Workings of Successful Food-Service Operation

A Novosibirsk American Councils-organized field trip on January 13, 2003 gave five alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs a firsthand opportunity to observe the workings of a thriving food-service operation. Four FSA Undergraduate alumni along with one FLEX alumna traveled to a local establishment called "Stone House," which contains three different restaurants. Natalya Bogatova, a current Muskie/FSA Graduate fellow, who developed and managed the restaurant and food processing divisions at Stone House from 1997-2002, was back in Novosibirsk taking part in a three-week internship. Natalya took the opportunity to share her experience working in the restaurant and food processing industries. The alumni also had the chance to meet with the vice-president of the Conquest Group, which manages Stone House and its three restaurants. Topics discussed were business planning, marketing, recruiting, human resource policies and food-service operation. For the alumni, the field trip was an excellent opportunity to learn more about the operations of a successful local business operation and to ask questions of those with expertise in this industry.

Tajikistan

Environmental Issues the Topic of an Alumni Workshop

Surrounded by the natural beauty of Tajikistan's Zeravshan Mountain Range, ten FSA Undergraduate and FLEX alumni participated in a Global Environmental Issues seminar from January

Open Forum

continued from page 3

Close to Home

by IRINA KHALTURINA



"You can't even imagine how hard life is in Iraq without all these things here that you take for granted," Foad told me two years ago in Baku. Foad, a 45-year-old Iraqi engineer, escaped from Hussein's regime and worked in Azerbaijan. "I'm sure Saddam deserves to be killed," he said slowly in the end of our long conversation about his country.

In fact, there are very few normal people who can support Saddam Hussein's regime. The world is divided into those who don't want war and those who think that there's no way except war.

During Desert Storm, school teachers taught us how to protect ourselves during a chemical contamination. People were afraid because of the proximity of Azerbaijan to Iraq. I don't know whether Hussein was going to use his chemical (and maybe even nuclear) weapons or not, but in the case of war there is more chance that he will use those weapons. You begin to look differently at war when it can come into your house as more than everyday news from the TV screen.

This war can also be dangerous because, unfortunately human beings are very illogical. Despite what all journalists and politicians are saying, there are still many people who perceive this war as a war against Islam and the Arab world.

It seems that mankind has invented nothing better than war to solve economic, political, and territorial problems. Two horrible world wars of the 20th century have taught us nothing. We work wonders in medicine and in technology, we create masterpieces in art, we believe in our God (as Christians, Muslims, Buddhists or somebody else), and we keep on killing each other.

Do you know what was the very end of my conversation with Foad? His words: "But I'm not sure that Saddam's death is worth one Iraqi child being killed."

Irina Khalturina studies at California State University at Bakersfield and is from Baku, Azerbaijan.

The Time to Fight?

by OXANA GUSELNIKOVA

The feminist movement has received wide attention in the 20th century, especially in the U.S. and Europe. Now it's slowly coming to Russia. However, the public often misunderstands the movement. It seems to me that the Russian mass media has created a distorted idea of what feminism really is. Here is what we hear on the news: American feminists went topless on the streets to protect their right to be equal to men; feminists fight for the right to serve at the most extreme jobs in the military; a true feminist doesn't let a man open the door for her or pay for a dinner. However, is this what feminism is about? Could it really be so superficial? More likely, these are the extremes that do not let us see what feminism really stands for. In my opinion, feminism is not about walking around topless and thus being equal. Feminism is about respecting yourself as a woman and realizing your right to get what you deserve. Feminism is about being able to do what you are capable of doing, having freedom of choice and being treated as a woman. This is probably what constitutes the essence of feminism and what those women abroad have in mind.

Now, Russia also needs a true women's movement capable of changing women's lives for the better. Is prostitution thriving in big cities? Are women underrepresented in politics and upper-level management? Do they often become victims of violent behavior? Is it harder for women to do business? Do many upper-level jobs clearly state that they prefer a male candidate? If we answer "yes" to any of these questions, then maybe it is about time to realize what feminism is about.

Oxana Guselnikova (2001-2002) studied at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York, and is from Vladivostok, Russia.

The Old World and New Realities

by ALEXANDER SHLYK

Europe is experiencing days of tough decisions and important choices as the U.S. becomes more and more straightforward. Strong anti-war positions taken by France and Germany face the transatlantic alliance of London and Washington joined by Spain, Italy, Portugal and most of the candidate countries. The recent visit of Mr. Rumsfeld to Europe demonstrates the existence of the gap between two different approaches in Europe. Will it make the unity of Europe weaker? No, certainly, not!

The current crisis will definitely slow down the internal processes in the Europe of today—reform of European institutions and development of the European Constitution. However, the overall development will only benefit from minor disagreements the countries of Europe face today. Europe gets a chance to learn an important lesson of internal cooperation. Neither Britain, nor Italy—and, definitely, not Portugal—will sacrifice their long-term benefits of membership in the EU for the less certain gains of the close alliance with the U.S. None of the countries that proclaimed their support of the U.S. initiative have rejected the approach inspired by the European Union—they never increased their defense budgets to the level advised by the U.S., and none of them has ever cut their financial aid to developing countries. Therefore, the transatlantic alliance of military-oriented U.S. and the European "sissies"—as a favorite of the Washington hawks Robert Kagan named them recently—is also not free of controversy. An alliance where parties do not completely share the basic concepts can be effective for some time and for some particular task but does not give an impression of universal and promising union.

Therefore, the most important lesson that the "alliance of the willing" is going to teach the world is the one that the united Europe will learn.

Alexander Shlyk studies at Southern Maine Technical College in South Portland, Maine and is from Minsk, Belarus.

Congratulations to the First “University Awards” Grantees!

As was reported in the first issue of *Notes from UnderGrad*, a new small-grants program specifically for FSA Undergraduate alumni was launched this past fall. The first two awardees of this grant are undertaking their projects right now. They are:

Qobil Yunusov, Andijan City, Uzbekistan

Project title: “Project to improve our institute’s newspaper, organize a cross-functional newspaper team, and introduce new marketing tactics.”

Project description: Qobil’s project involves training a new contingent of student newspaper volunteers to vastly improve the marketing and content of their school newspaper, including a “Student Life Abroad” section as well as “Student Entertainment” pages. The project also includes funding to purchase some specific marketing-oriented equipment, and guarantees project sustainability through the introduction of a subscription-based publication in the future. The project leader is Qobil Yunusov and project coordinator is Inoyat Sadikova, 2002 FSA Undergraduate alumna from the University of Wisconsin at Richland.

Qobil Yunusov is a 2001-2002 FSA Undergraduate alumnus of Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, and a current student at the Andijan Institute of Engineering and Economics.

Oleksandra Skrypnyk, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Project title: “Video in Teaching English”

Project description: Oleksandra Skrypnyk is undertaking the creation of a new film and language course for the English language department at her university. The course will train the future English teachers from the university in better language-learning techniques and substantive discussions related to U.S. culture and themes of the films. Oleksandra is an active alumna and took part in a Film Forum at her U.S. university.



Oleksandra Skrypnyk is a 2001-2002 FSA Undergraduate alumna of North Park University in Chicago, Illinois, and a current student at Kharkiv State Skovoroda Pedagogical University.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Small Grants Program for FSA Undergraduate Alumni: “University Awards Program”

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS under the auspices of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

of the U.S. Department of State have initiated a small grants program for alumni of the FREEDOM Support Act (FSA) Undergraduate Program. The University Awards Program is designed to support alumni leadership initiatives on their home university campuses that further the objectives of the FSA Undergraduate Program, such as community outreach, cultural exchange and other educational activities, and enrich campus life for all students.

WHO: FSA Undergraduate Alumni

WHAT: Grants up to \$500 each

WHEN: Open deadline while grant funds last

WHY: For enhanced cultural, academic or social atmosphere on your home university campus

HOW: Find an application form on www.americancouncils.org or visit your local American Councils office to pick up a form.

ECA Small Grants Program

The ECA Alumni Small Grants Program provides grants to alumni of selected Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)-sponsored programs to undertake professional development activities. The purpose of the ECA Alumni Small Grants Program is to further the professional development of ECA alumni. Grants are a maximum of \$1,500, and allow alumni to do the following: conduct a public or community service activity; attend conferences in the Eurasia; make research trips in Eurasia; publish self-authored materials; organize a pilot program; extend memberships to professional organizations relative

to their fields; fund travel to Eurasia for U.S. colleagues for conferences, professional consultations or research projects; organize training programs or conferences for other alumni and ECA constituencies; conduct any other projects judged to be in the interest of the program goals by the selection committee and/or ECA.

WHO: Alumni of the FREEDOM Support Act Undergraduate Program, the FREEDOM Support Act Contemporary Issues Program (CI), the Regional Scholar Exchange Program (RSEP), and the Russian-US Young Leadership Fellows for Public Service Program (YLF).

WHAT: A grant program that aims to further the professional development of select ECA alumni.

WHEN: Annual deadline of February 1st; the next round of applications will be solicited February 1, 2004.

WHERE: ECA alumni from Eurasia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan) are eligible to apply.

HOW: More information, including applications, is available online at: www.irex.org/alumni/grants.asp.

Register today on Stateexchange! Stateexchange is a place to exchange information and news with fellow U.S. State Department exchange program alumni. To join Stateexchange, please visit <https://stateexchange.state.gov/join/join1.cfm> and fill in the required information in order to obtain a user name and password for the site.



From the Field

continued from page 2

NATALIA KOCHETUROVA, NOVOSIBIRSK, RUSSIA:



Astonishing experience of being an important part of the ECA alumni community

Lots of ideas giving tangible results

Unbelievable combination of work, hobby and fun

Many possibilities to obtain new knowledge and skills

Networking

Ideal chances for actually doing something for the community

Feeling the help and support of the team of alumni fellows

Energy and optimism

Living in the center of interesting events

Leadership experience

Opportunity for expressing oneself

Wow! Just Wow!

GIO MELADZE, TBILISI, GEORGIA:

"Each alumna/alumnus has an excess of fresh, innovative and breathtaking ideas after he/she returns home. Alumni think that it is always great to see other alumni and hold a variety of events together that are both fun and educational for themselves and local community. Thus, for me personally, having this opportunity of being an FSA Undergraduate alumni fellow has meant three things: first, it has been a great honor; second, I get to help or make these ideas come true; and finally, it means B.I.G. (Being Interesting and Great)!!!"



Bulletin Board

May

01	"Multi-Ethnic Day"	Almaty, Kazakhstan
03	"Ecology" – Such a Strange Word: Earth Day Celebration	Minsk, Belarus
3-4	High School Outreach Program #4	Chisinau, Moldova
04	Earth Day Clean-Up and Picnic	Chuli, Turkmenistan
05	Earth Day Project and Picnic	Kyiv, Ukraine
05	Earth Day Event	Baku, Azerbaijan
05	Easter Egg Hunt	Tbilisi, Georgia
09	Victory Day Visit to Veterans' Home	Kharkiv, Ukraine
09	Veteran's Day Celebration	Almaty, Kazakhstan
9-11	Excursion to Ecology Camp	Minsk, Belarus
11	Earth Day Activity	Novosibirsk, Russia
14	Easter Egg Hunt	Chisinau, Moldova
15	Activity with Alpine Fund at Orphanage	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
18	Trip to Charyn	Charyn, Kazakhstan
19	Career Day Event	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
21	"The Best Way to Spend Your Summer" Seminar	Minsk, Belarus
23	Job Fair	Kyiv, Ukraine
24	FSAU Alumni Paper Presentation	Gandja, Azerbaijan
24	Resume Writing and Networking Skills Seminar	St. Petersburg, Russia
25	Internet and Microsoft Office Workshop with IATP	Yerevan, Armenia
TBD	Athletic Competitions to Celebrate 300 th Anniversary	St. Petersburg, Russia

June

01	Children's Day Celebration at Local Orphanage	Chisinau, Moldova
01	Children's Day Celebration at Local Orphanage	Almaty, Kazakhstan
02	Earth Day Event	Almaty, Kazakhstan
12	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Chisinau, Moldova
14	Varzob Lake Clean-Up: Activity with FLEX Alumni	Varzob Lake, Tajikistan
TBD	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	St. Petersburg, Russia
TBD	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Novosibirsk, Russia
14	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Minsk, Belarus
20-21	Conference: "The Future of Civil Society..."	Volgograd, Russia
21-29	FSAU Alumni as Counselors at Girls' Summer Camp	Chisinau, Moldova
23	Welcome Home Celebration at Medeo	Almaty, Kazakhstan
23	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
23	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Kyiv, Ukraine
23	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Bulletin Board

23	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
23	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Yerevan, Armenia
23	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Baku, Azerbaijan
29	Welcome Home Reception for new FSAU Alumni	Kharkiv, Ukraine

July

4	Welcome Home Picnic and July 4 th Celebration	Tbilisi, Georgia
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Summer 2003

Re-entry seminars for newly returning FSA Undergraduate students will be held this summer in the following locations:

Almaty, Kazakhstan	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan	Baku, Azerbaijan
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	Chisinau, Moldova	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Kharkiv, Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine	Minsk, Belarus
Moscow, Russia	Novosibirsk, Russia	St. Petersburg, Russia
Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Tbilisi, Georgia	Vladivostok, Russia
Volgograd, Russia	Yerevan, Armenia	

Newly returning alumni will be invited to these events by your local American Councils or IREX representative. Make sure you report any change of address, telephone, or email address to these local offices when you return home so that you receive the invitation in a timely manner. Questions about the dates and locations can be addressed to your local FSAU alumni fellow (see back cover for this information). Older alumni who live in these cities and are interested in volunteering to speak at the seminar should also contact their alumni fellow for more information.

Announcement:

American Councils seeking new round of FSA Undergraduate Alumni Fellows

WHO: Alumni who have successfully completed the FSA Undergraduate Program are eligible to apply for this one-year, part-time position.

WHAT: Alumni Fellows work with American Councils staff to coordinate and report on FSA Undergraduate alumni activities in their country or region. Fellows will attend a week-long training workshop in Moscow, Russia, in August 2003.

WHY: The goal of the FSA Undergraduate alumni program is to encourage alumni involvement in a variety of activities including community service, professional development, networking and social activities, current affairs/issue-oriented dialogues, and activities designed to inform a wider audience about their experience as program participants. We believe that these activities should be initiated and organized by alumni themselves and have set aside funds to support these endeavors.

WHERE: In the capital cities of the 12 Eurasian countries, plus Kharkiv, Ukraine and Vladivostok, Novosibirsk, and Volgograd, Russia.

WHEN: Applications should be submitted to your local American Councils office by June 9, 2003.

HOW: Full job descriptions and applications will be available in May 2003. Contact your local alumni fellow for more information about this in May (see contact information on back cover).

Have something of interest to the FSAU community that you'd like to post to the bulletin board? Please send to a member of the editorial committee before the next deadline of May 30, 2003.

From the Field

KATERYNA NALYVAYKO, KHARKIV, UKRAINE:

"For the past three years I have been closely working with different intercultural programs. The visit to the United States in 1999-2000 helped me realize the importance of finding consensus between cultures and being tolerant to other views and traditions. In 2000, when I got back, American Councils, through a Sexual Health conference, helped me get acquainted with an enthusiastic group of FSA FLEX alumni and we started to work together in the Kharkiv NGO "Youth Council." When I got this job as the alumni fellow I could not believe it, because now I had a real opportunity to try and make my dreams come true—to unite Undergrads. I think *Notes from Undergrad*, regional conferences and listserves are the essential parts of our great community now. And you can see that changes in this community have started lately, no matter how small they might seem, due to the attention paid to the Undergraduate community."



Kateryna is pictured outside the Ukrainian Parliament with Eric Weisz, UNDP representative, during an October 2002 UN Youth Summit.

BEKZOD ABDUKARIMOV, TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN:

"Organizing alumni events is one of the most gratifying and fun aspects of my work. It is a great pleasure to see and encourage alumni involvement in community service, professional development, networking and social activities. I would describe Uzbekistan's Ugrad alumni as active, eager to learn and social. It is satisfying to see alumni establish themselves in successful positions in NGOs, business, government and private sector and become an effective force in shaping Uzbekistan's future."



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